# Attack on medical college campus foiled

• Attackers escape taking their three injured accomplices with them • Two found shot dead in Mangocher • Shootings in Hub claim two lives • Five held as terror bid thwarted in Ziarat

By Ali Jan Mangi and Abdul Wahid Shahwani

DEAR MURAD JAMALI/ KHUZDAR: Three alleged militants were injured in exchange of fire with security forces near Dera Murad Jamali on Sunday.

Officials said armed men arrived in the area and launched an attack on the under-construction campus of the Benazir Bhutto Medical College near Dera Murad Jamali.

Soon after receiving information about the attack on the college campus, police as well as the security forces rushed to the site and cordoned off the area, retaliating against the armed men. A heavy exchange of fire continued for some time, resulting in injuries to three militants.

However, the attackers escaped after the gun battle, taking their three injured accomplices with them.

The security forces reportedly used drones in the fight. No loss of life was reported in firing at the college campus.

**Two bodies found in Mangocher**

Meanwhile, two men were found shot dead near the mountain range of Badrang area in Mangocher on Sunday.

After receiving information from the residents about the presence of the bodies, police rushed to the spot, cordoned it off and shifted the bodies to district hospital for medico-legal formalities. "The cause of death was multiple bullet wounds," a hospital official said.

The deceased were later identified as Qutab Ali, a resident of Sheikhri village, and Ali Muhammad, who hailed from the Johan area of Kalat district.

**Shootings in Hub**

In Hub, a woman and a man were killed in separate gun attacks. Police said that unidentified assailants opened fire on a woman, killing her.

Similarly, a young man was gunned down in Jam Colony. The identity of both victims could not be ascertained immediately.

**Five held in Ziarat**

Security forces foiled a suspected terrorist attack in Ziarat district and arrested five armed men late on Sunday evening.

Officials said the arrests were made at a checkpost on the outskirts of Ziarat town.

"Security forces intercepted the terrorists at Asperah Raghla checkpost and prevented their attempt to flee," confirmed Ziarat Deputy Commissioner Riaz Dawar, adding that the suspects belonged to Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

Weapons seized from the detainees included 11 hand grenades, three submachine guns, two M4 rifles, a grenade launcher, a large quantity of ammunition and communication equipment. A motorcycle and literature linked to the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were also recovered.

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti praised the security forces for the operation. "The timely action of the security forces and their sacrifices for the protection of the people of Balochistan are our pride," he said.

*Saleem Shahid from Quetta also contributed to this report*

# PML-N largely sweeps lacklustre by-elections

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secured 29,805 votes, according to results from 247 out of 345 polling stations.

On the other hand, the PTI claimed to have secured a lead in Haripur, citing results from 341 polling stations. PTI insiders claimed that their candidates bagged 102,136 against Babar Nawaz's tally of 78,066 votes, citing results from 341 polling stations.

However, by the time this report went to press, results from 292 out of 602 polling stations had been shared by the ECP on its media dashboard, showing PML-N candidate Babar Nawaz ahead with 81,655 votes against Shehrnaz Ayub's 56,981 votes.

**Punjab Assembly seats**

PML-N candidate Muhammad Hanif secured 45,073 votes against independent nominee Falak Sher's 10,670 in PP-203. In PP-87, PML-N's Ali Haider Noor Khan Niazi bagged 67,986 votes while runner-up Mohammad Ayaz Niazi got 6,371 votes. In PP-115, PML-N candidate Tahir Pervaiz got 49,046 votes while his rival could not secure more than 2,000 votes. In PP-116, PML-N candidate Ahmad Shehryar received 48,824 votes while Asghar Ali got 11,429 votes, as per Form-47. In PP-73, PML-N's Sultan Ali Ranjha got 71,770 votes and emerged victorious.

In PP-269, PPP nominee Alamdar Abbas Qureshi secured 55,868 votes while Iqbal Khan bagged 46,510 votes.

In PP-98, PML-N's Azad Ali Tabassum secured 29,227 votes while his rival Muhammad Ajmal got 20,472 votes, according to results received from 104 out of 171 polling stations.

**'Robust turnout'**

Earlier while speaking to journalists in Islamabad on Sunday evening, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar was confident that the PML-N would secure a clear lead in the by-elections, evident by the "robust turnout".

Mr Tarar said the PML-N candidate enjoyed a strong position in Lahore, with party teams actively involved throughout the polling process. He said voter turnout for the party had been highly encouraging across Lahore, Faisalabad, Sahiwal and Dera Ghazi Khan.

A WOMAN receives her voter number from polling agents.—Online

He said the PTI's decision to boycott the exercise would have political repercussions for the opposition party. "Political boycotts carry inevitable cost as there is no room for such decisions in democratic practice," he said in reference to the opposition party. He claimed that by-elections witnessed a robust voter turnout, with citizens from across social and economic divides stepping forward to exercise their democratic right.

"In Lahore, unusually large crowds gathered at polling camps, while Dera Ghazi Khan reported a steady flow of voters throughout the day. Elderly citizens, young people and women turned out in significant numbers, reflecting broad public participation in the electoral process," he said.

**Low turnout**

In most constituencies, however, the voter turnout remained quite low.

The disinterest could be gauged from the fact that one polling station in NA-96 (Faisalabad) did not see a single voter for hours after polling opened. Meanwhile, announcements were made through the loudspeakers of local mosques both in Faisalabad and Sahiwal, urging people to come out of their homes and exercise their right to franchise as a national duty.

Similarly, a video clip of Faisalabad City Police Officer Bilal Omer's visit to multiple polling stations also showed barely any voters present, with cops filling the venue instead. Similarly, workers at the camps of PML-N's Tabbasum and independent candidates Wasim Akram Chattha and Haji Ajmal Cheema at a government school polling station reported "almost no voters" at around 12pm in PP-98.

Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, however, justified the low turnout, saying these elections were not supposed to change the "number game" in parliament, which was the reason for the lack of enthusiasm.

Speaking to reporters at the ECP monitoring room in Islamabad, he said the election remained peaceful in both provinces and thanked the provincial governments for their cooperation. "This election was not supposed to change the numbers game in parliament. This is the reason why the turnout was low in today's elections," he added.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency President Ahmed Bilal Mehboob posted on social media platform X that if the ruling PML-N managed to win five NA seats in these by-polls, "it will not need PPP votes for a simple majority in [the] NA in future, or in other words, PML-N can stay in power without PPP's support!"

**Rigging allegations**

Earlier, PTI leader Hammad Azhar alleged that ballot books are being received by the presiding officers less than the number of books issued to them in the by-polls for NA-129 (Lahore-XIII).

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, he shared Form-36 (packing invoice containing the quantity of ballot paper books) of polling station No. 330 in NA-129, which said that 18 ballot paper books, from serial No.5179 to 7194 and each containing 100 ballots, had been issued. But the presiding officer encircled the number 18 and wrote with her pen the number 15 and signed the form.

The ballot books were meant for a female polling station for 1,716 voters.

The spokesperson for the ECP declined to comment, while an official attributed the discrepancy to a typographic error as the number of ballot books issued to the polling station (330) was 15 as confirmed by the serial number — from 5179-5194 — mentioned in the next column of the Form-36.

Separately, Punjab Assembly Opposition Leader Moeen Riaz Qureshi accused the authorities of "uprooting almost 99 per cent" of the PTI's camps outside polling stations in Lahore. Mr Qureshi pointed out the low voter turnout and claimed that the PML-N attempted to "sabotage the by-polls by distributing more than half of the polling stations' lists" in other areas, resulting in voters heading to the wrong polling stations. The PTI also claimed that Central Punjab Youth Wing President Mian Hassan Shakeel and others were injured by PML-N workers at a polling station in NA-129.

Similarly, former KP minister Yusuf Ayub accused the ECP of being biased against their candidate Shehrnaz Omar Ayub. "The election commission's biased approach is evident from the posting of presiding officers, other polling staff, and changing our election symbol," he said. He acknowledged that the voter turnout remained low but expressed the hope that, despite all the bias, the PTI candidate would win the election with a margin of 100,000 votes.

PTI's Faisalabad president Adil Pervez Gujjar also served a show cause notice on Deputy Coordinator Women Wing Azra Parveen for contesting the by-polls from NA-96 against party policy.

*Tariq Saeed from Toba Tek Singh, Shafiq Butt from Sahiwal, Tariq Birmany from D.G. Khan, Sajjad Niazi from Sargodha and Khursheed Anwar from Mianwali also contributed to this report*

# Alarmed by weakness of audit mechanism, IMF calls for independent AGP

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implementation of the PFM Act 2019 still remains a dream after six years.

"In addition, ministries and divisions with CFAOs lack consistency, interest, and follow-up on the findings of internal audit reports," it said. The Fund also questioned why the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) was still operating as an attached institution of the Federal Secretariat, which resulted in a lack of full independence.

According to Article 171 of the Constitution and Article 7 of the Pakistan Audit Ordinance, 2001, the AGP has to attest the Appropriation accounts and financial statements of federal, provincial and local governments' entities and the certified accounts and financial statements of the federal and provincial/local governments are submitted to the president and the governors of provinces, respectively.

"Due to its status as an attached institution, the Auditor General does not report directly to the parliament but instead through the Federal Secretariat, the prime minister, and the president. This indirect reporting structure can potentially compromise the independence and objectivity of the audit process," it said.

In addition, as an attached institution, the OAG has to obtain approval from the federal Public Service Commission to hire auditors. The OAG complained to the IMF that they faced a significant staffing shortage — a deficit of 1,500 staff members — mainly due to fiscal constraints preventing necessary government approvals for hiring.

Despite the fact that the budget of the Auditor General is classified as charged expenditure, which means it is not subject to a parliamentary vote, the OAG still needs to adhere to budget execution rules. Consequently, they are subject to budget releases by the Finance Division, subject to cash availability.

"This dependency on the Federal Secretariat for budget releases further limits the OAG's operational independence", critically important for Supreme Audit Institutions to perform their tasks as needed and required, it said.

As if that was not enough, the effectiveness of the audit process was further being undermined by the excessively long reports that contain repetitive recommendations and the lack of timely review by the PAC.

The Office of the Auditor General produced over 6,000 reports each year, but there was minimal or no follow-up from the Public Account Committee and the ministries and divisions. "As a result, 75 per cent of the 34,000 recommendations made by the Supreme Audit Institution are still pending discussion in the PAC.

Moreover, it pointed out that the audit reports were often too lengthy, with some reaching up to thousands of pages that included repetitive recommendations for years since these irregularities identified in the reports are not addressed by the executive agencies. For instance, the Federal Government Compliance Audit Report for FY2023-24 is 4,000 pages long.

On top of that, there are no systems in place for monitoring the response to or compliance with audit findings and recommendations, which further diminishes the impact and effectiveness of the audit process.

The IMF demanded the development of a system that could make executive authority responsible and accountable in case of non-compliance with audit recommendations as well as PAC directions.

For this, the lender suggested making appropriate amendments to the PAC regulations and AGP Act to empower these institutions to ensure compliance with their directives.

Going forward, the IMF also demanded streamlining audit reports by including concise recommendations for the most critical issues and organising findings by their impact and urgency, using visual tools like traffic light systems to indicate the severity of issues.

In addition, the Fund also demanded strengthening of the parliamentary oversight by mandating the PAC to review audit reports promptly, supported by a tracking system on implementation progress through a centralised secretariat for monitoring and improved transparency and accountability.

# Fair local govt polls pledged in Quetta

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: The Election Commissioner of Balochistan, Ali Asghar Sial, has said that all possible efforts will be made to hold free, fair and transparent local government elections in Quetta district.

According to the election schedule, polling will take place on Dec 28 and results will be announced on Dec 31.

Speaking at a meeting held to review arrangements for holding elections for Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC), Mr Sial said that foolproof security arrangements would be made with the help of security forces and the provincial government during the LG elections.

The meeting discussed polling scheme, delivery of election materials and other issues.

It was decided that the election commission, district administration and police would jointly implement the security plan with mutual communication and effective coordination so that people could vote in a safe and peaceful environment.

The meeting was informed that uninterrupted power supply would be ensured and necessary facilities would be provided at all polling stations and the code of election would be implemented strictly.

Mr Sial directed the institutions concerned to strengthen mutual cooperation so that the polls could be held in a peaceful and orderly manner.

# EU backs Pakistan's call

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women, girls and vulnerable communities," the statement read.

Earlier this month, Denmark also pointed to the "serious threat" posed by the banned TTP in Central and South Asia and said that the terror outfit had been receiving "logistical and substantial support from the de facto authorities".

In the capacity of the chair of the Security Council ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, Denmark raised these concerns while briefing a UNSC meeting held in New York.

The presence of TTP militants in Afghanistan has long been a point of contention between Islamabad and the Taliban administration. Since the Taliban's return to power in Kabul in 2021, Pakistan has accused the group of sheltering thousands of TTP fighters, who have escalated attacks on Pakistani security forces, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

**Spike in terrorism**

Since 2022, Pakistan has seen a spate of attacks by the banned group, and security forces routinely engage in counter-terrorism operations along the north-western border to eliminate the threat.

The spike in incidents followed the TTP ending a ceasefire with the government in November 2022 and vowing to attack security forces, police, and personnel of law enforcement agencies. Pakistan's bilateral relations with Afghanistan have also come under strain in recent times as the TTP remains the main point of contention between the two countries. Pakistan has demanded that the rulers in Kabul take action to stop cross-border terrorism.

But the Afghan Taliban deny Islamabad's allegation of terrorists being allowed to use Afghan soil to carry out attacks in Pakistan. During a dialogue, which followed border clashes between the two countries in October, the two sides met in an effort to work on mechanisms for lasting peace and stability between the two countries.

On Oct 25, the second round of talks between the two sides began in the Turkish capital. But Information Minister Attaullah Tarar then announced that the talks "failed to bring about any workable solution".

However, mediators from Turkiye and Qatar intervened and managed to salvage the process with an Oct 31 joint statement released by Turkiye, stating that "further modalities of the implementation will be discussed and decided" during a principal-level meeting in Istanbul on Nov 6.

But on Nov 7, after the third round of talks, Defence Minister Khawaja said that talks addressing cross-border terrorism were "over" and "entered an indefinite phase" as negotiators failed to bridge deep differences between the two sides.

Following the failure of the talks, the Afghan Taliban suspended trade ties with Islamabad. Pakistan had already closed its border for trade soon after the October clashes.

# PM's aide extends another offer of talks to PTI

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said, adding that he had run in two by-elections in the same constituency and had observed that the turnout was always lower than in general elections.

"There should be no incidents like those of Oct 12, 1999, or 2017–2018, when a conspiracy was plotted against Pakistan and a project was launched that injected a culture of hatred [… and] enmity into politics."

Mr Sanaullah said that all efforts were made by PML-N activists to bring voters to the polling stations, while the opposing independent candidates did not even have camps or polling agents at most polling stations, and were just spreading propaganda on social media.

**Rejects rigging allegations**

Regarding the allegations of rigging made by some candidates against the PML-N, he said they were completely "baseless", as every polling station could be observed and there was nothing wrong taking place.

Mr Sanaullah said that no complaint had been received from any polling station throughout the constituency.

He continued that some opponents began alleging code-of-conduct violations "even when only 10 votes had been cast," but the administration ensured a peaceful polling process.

"The voting process during the by-election proceeded smoothly, no opposition candidate or worker was stopped anywhere in the constituency, and no one has any grounds to complain," he added.

"But despite that, if someone wants to cry foul, and if someone has started crying foul since yesterday and today morning about rigging, then we have no solution for that."

He claimed that no arrests were made in the entire constituency, nor was any kind of obstacle created.

**'PML-N deserves votes'**

"We hope that people will vote for service, progress and solutions to their issues," the premier's aide said, adding that the PML-N was the only deserving party for that.

Mr Sanaullah said voters supported the development agenda of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, who had launched a new era of development during her tenure.

He added that the chief minister had generously approved a number of projects for Faisalabad worth more than Rs70 billion, and she was scheduled to visit Faisalabad to inaugurate these projects.

However, they requested her to postpone the visit due to the by-election in five constituencies of the Faisalabad district in line with the Election Commission of Pakistan's campaigning rules.

Talking about tensions with India, Mr Sanaullah said Islamabad had strongly responded to New Delhi's aggression, and added that, for the first time, the world acknowledged that Pakistan had won the war.

Replying to a question about the denial of meetings with the PTI founder in jail, he said that during the party's government, he (Mr Sanaullah) remained in jail for six and a half months, and except for his family and two lawyers, no one else was allowed to meet him.

# FO slams Indian minister

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rhetoric "stands in clear violation of international law, the inviolability of recognised borders, and the sovereignty of states", warning that provocative statements of this kind "threaten regional peace and stability."

The FO urged Indian leaders to "refrain from provocative rhetoric" and instead focus on their domestic issues, saying it would be "far more constructive for the Government of India to ensure the security of its own citizens, particularly vulnerable minority communities".

The statement also pressed New Delhi to "hold accountable those who incite or perpetrate violence" against minorities and to "address discrimination rooted in faith-based prejudice and historical distortions".

Citing unrest and grievances in India's northeast, the FO said many communities there "continue to face systematic marginalisation, identity-based persecution, and cycles of state-enabled violence".

Reiterating its position on the Kashmir dispute, the FO called on India to take "credible steps toward the genuine resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people under occupation".

The FO said Pakistan is firmly resolved to safeguard its security, national independence and sovereignty.

**ANNULMENT OF**

**PUBLIC AUCTION NOTICE**

This is with reference of OGDC advertisement regarding PUBLIC AUCTION NOTICE published in newspapers on 26-10-2025 and CORRIGENDUM (PUBLIC AUCTION NOTICE) of the same advertisement published in newspapers on 28-10-2025.

**In the said advertisements, the auction at Dakhni Gas Plant, Tehsil Jand, Fateh Jang, Punjab for Misc Scrap, Electrical Items, Tyres, Batteries etc. scheduled to be held on 25-11-2025 has been cancelled.** The auctions at other locations will be held as per schedule and terms and conditions published in the CORRIGENDUM (PUBLIC AUCTION NOTICE) on 28-10-2025.

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**General Manager**
**(Materials Management)**
**Oil & Gas Development Company Limited**
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